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VOC FOR IOP/FN
POLITICAL FEATURE 1-0418
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MARCH 23, 1976

INTRA-ASIAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: AN OVERVIEW
(FOURTH OF FOUR-PART SERIES)

ANNCR:

THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND FOREIGN POLICIES OF THE COUNTRIES OF ASIA WERE EXAMINED IN DETAIL RECENTLY (MARCH 20) AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ASIAN STUDIES, HELD THIS YEAR IN THE CANADIAN CITY OF TORONTO. VOA'S JOSEPH SULLIVAN WAS THERE, AND IN THIS (THE LAST OF FOUR) REPORT(S). LOOKS AT THIS SUBJECT AS VIEWED BY A DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN SCHOLAR IN ASIAN AFFAIRS.

VOICE:

THE SCHOLAR IS ROBERT SCALAPINO, PROFESSOR IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND THE AUTHOR OF NUMEROUS ARTICLES ON CONTEMPORARY ASIAN POLITICS. PROFESSOR SCALAPINO BELIEVES THAT THE CLEAREST RESULT OF EVENTS IN ASIA OVER THE PAST DECADE HAS BEEN A TREND TOWARD WHAT HE CALLS ASIANIZATION. THAT IS, A MOVEMENT TOWARD THE MORE INTRICATE AND INTENSIVE INVOLVEMENT OF THE ASIAN STATES WITH EACH OTHER... WHETHER IN HARMONY OR CONFLICT.

THIS TREND, PROFESSOR SCALAPINO SAYS, HAS HAD IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES ON THE STRATEGY FOLLOWED BY THE GREAT POWERS IN THE AREA. THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION IN PARTICULAR, HE SAYS, IS RENDERED MORE COMPLEX, SINCE IT IS BOTH AN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FORCE INSOFAR AS ASIA IS CONCERNED. NOR, HE ADDS, CAN ONE BE CERTAIN YET OF THE POINT AT WHICH AMERICAN COMMITMENTS IN ASIA WILL STABILIZE GIVEN THE EXTENSIVE NATURE OF AMERICAN INTERESTS IN THE AREA. JAPAN, HE SAYS, INDISPUTABLY AN ASIAN SOCIETY, IS ALSO ONE OF THE WORLD'S TWO GLOBAL

ECONOMIC POWERS, AND THUS HAS CONCERNS AND POLICIES THAT EXTEND FAR BEYOND ASIA.

PROFESSOR SCALAPINO FURTHER BELIEVES THAT THERE IS IN ASIA TODAY AN UNMISTAKABLE TREND AWAY FROM EXCLUSIVE ALLIANCES AND TOWARD WHAT HE CALL "THE POLITICS OF EQUIDISTANCE." IN HIS WORDS: "WHEREVER ONE LOOKS IN ASIA TODAY, THE OLD, EXCLUSIVE, ALL-ENCOMPASSING ALLIANCES ARE GIVING WAY TO NEW ARRANGEMENTS. AND MOST OF THE SMALL NATIONS OF ASIA HAVE BEEN STRONGLY AFFECTED BY THIS NEW ORDER." WITH THE PROGRESSIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE EARLY POSTWAR ALLIANCE SYSTEM, HE ADDS, EACH ASIAN NATION -- LARGE AND SMALL -- HAS HAD TO REPOSITION ITSELF IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW PATTERNS OF POWER.

PROFESSOR SCALAPINO ADMITS THAT THE INFLUENCE OF THE GREAT POWERS REMAINS STRONG IN ASIA, DESPITE THE TREND TOWARD ASIANIZATION. TWO POWERS, HE SAYS, -- THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA -- HAVE AS ONE GOAL A GREATER STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL ROLE IN ASIA, AND BOTH, HE NOTES, ARE CURRENTLY MAKING AN EFFORT TO EXPAND THEIR MILITARY REACH. THE UNITED STATES, HE ADDS, REMAINS THE STRONGEST NATION IN THE WORLD IN MATERIAL TERMS, AND ONE WHOSE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INTEREST IN ASIA ARE GROWING IN MANY RESPECTS RATHER THAN DECLINING. WHILE STILL GRAPPLING WITH RECESSION, HE NOTES, JAPANESE ECONOMIC POWER SHAPES THE COURSE OF MANY SOCIETIES AROUND IT.

BUT, IN PROFESSOR SCALAPINO'S VIEW, THE GREAT POWERS IN THE AREA SHARE WEAKNESSES AS WELL AS STRENGTHS. RUSSIAN CULTURE, HE OBSERVES, IS LARGELY UNSUITED TO ASSIMILATION IN ASIA, AND THE SOVIET DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM REPRESENTS A DUBIOUS MODEL FOR MOST ASIAN SOCIETIES. CHINESE SOCIETY, HE ADDS, IS RIFE WITH A SERIES OF COMPLEX ISSUES CENTERING

UPON THE PROBLEM OF COMBINING REVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT. AND THIS, HE ADDS, HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE DUALISM IN PEKING'S POLICIES IN ASIA WHICH, HE SAYS, PROVIDES BOTH A POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ELEMENT FOR THE CHINESE IMAGE IN THE AREA. AS FOR THE UNITED STATES, PROFESSOR SCALAPINO CITES A LACK OF CONSENSUS SUPPORTING AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN ASIA, WHICH WILE NOT NEW, COMES AT A TIME WHEN IT PLAYS IN A CRUCIAL WAY. FOR JAPAN, HE SAYS, THE ENERGY CRISIS AND THE GLOBAL RECESSION HAVE REINFORCED TOKYO'S EFFORTS TO SEPARATE ECONOMICS AND POLITICS IN JAPAN'S FOREIGN POLICIES. THIS, HE SAYS, PROVIDES A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO ANY RESTORATION OF A HIGH-POSTURE, POWER-ORIENTED DIPLOMACY IN ASIA.

IN SUM, PROFESSOR SCALAPINO CONCLUDES, IT IS THE PARADOX OF WEAKNESS, IN THE MIDST OF UNPRECEDENTED PRODUCTIVITY AND MILITARY POWER, THAT CASTS ITS SHADOW! OVER THE FUTURE OF ASIAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS TODAY. AND, AS HE VIEWS THE FUTURE, IT IS THE ELEMENTS OF WEAKNESS THAT WILL INCREASINGLY VIE WITH THOSE OF STRENGTH IN SHAPING INTERSTATE RELATIONS IN ASIA IN A PERIOD WHEN GREAT POWER ALONE IS INSUFFICIENT TO UNDERWRITE A STABLE INTERNATIONAL ORDER.

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